

Telescope Peak

Death Valley National Park
California / Nevada



Length: 14 miles (22.5km) out and back round trip.

Difficulty: Difficult. 3,000 feet (914m) elevation gain. Starting at 8,133 feet (2,479m) and ending at the 11,049 foot (3,368m) summit, there is potential for elevation sickness.

Location: From CA-190 follow Emigrant Canyon Road to the trailhead at Mahogany Flat Campground. The final 5 miles of road is unpaved and may require a high clearance vehicle.

From Panamint Valley, follow Lower Wildrose Road to Wildrose Campground before turning right on Upper Wildrose Road to Mahogany Flat. The final 5 miles of road is unpaved and may require a high clearance vehicle.

Before You Go: Check the weather and road conditions prior to your trip. Carry water at all times. There is no cellular coverage in the area. Bring a map, compass, and GPS device to assist with navigation. Get free GPS files for your smartphone, tablet, or GPS device: nps.gov/deva/planyourvisit/hiking.htm

Route Description: The 10 space Mahogany Flat Campground located at the trailhead is the ideal place to spend the night and acclimate to the high elevation. There is no water at the camp.

The trail immediately begins as a steady climb along the eastern slope of the Panamint Mountains. Pinyon pine (*Pinus monophylla*) and the sweet smelling mountain mahogany (*Cercocarpus ledifolius*) line the trail reaching high overhead competing for light. Hiking through this forested tunnel the trees obscure all but the slightest views of valley floor sitting over 8,000 feet (2438m) below. In less than 1 mile (1.6km), the vegetation finally gives way to the first of many unobstructed and breathtaking views into Death Valley.

The trail continues the steady grade below Rogers Peak as it turns sharply west overlooking the middle fork of Hanaupah Canyon. At mile 2.4 (3.9km) it levels out at Arcane Meadows where views into both Panamint and Death Valleys. The meadow nestled between Rogers and Bennett Peaks is a popular camp for those wishing to backpack the route rather than day hike.

For the next 1.5 miles (2.4km) the trail meanders along the flat and narrow ridgeline passing the occasional limber pine (*Pinus flexilis*) and some of the best views in the entire park.

The next 3 miles (4.8km) gains over 1,000 feet (305m) as it steeply switchbacks amongst the ancient bristlecone pines (*Pinus longaeva*). Known to live over 5,000 years, these are some of the oldest living creatures on earth.

The final 0.2 miles (0.3km) up the narrow ridge to the summit may test the nerves of those with a fear of heights, but the payoff of the best 360° view in over 5,000 miles (8,000km) is worth the trip. On a clear day look far to the western horizon for the Sierra Nevada Mountains where Mount Whitney rises to 14,505 feet (4421m) as the highest point in North America. To the east at over 11,331 feet (3,454m) below sits the lowest point in North America, Badwater Basin at -282 feet (-86m) below sea level. Return via same route.